

## Prayer

Lord of my life, my joy, my peace, my strength, my all, I give you my worship this day because of all You have done through saving me from sin, because of the blessing of your continued presence with me now, and because of the glorious hope of eternal life You have promised me for the future. You, Lord God, have done all things well. Alleluia, AMEN.

## Other Prayer Suggestions

### Weekly Theme: World Politics

*We will continue with this theme as there is so much worthy of our attention. Pray for the Arctic and the Antarctic, and for proper control and use of the valuable science done there.*

### On-going prayers

- *Pray for people who live on the streets within your country*
- *Give thanks for security in your home*
- *Pray for people everywhere who are searching to find faith*

## Meditation

Stay beside me, Lord, I pray. You have given me every blessing.

Lord of direction, go with me wherever I go;

Lord of protection, surround me with Your love;

Lord of purity, clean the pollution in my mind;

Lord of security, protect my family from all evil;

Lord of faithfulness, show me Yourself in others;

Lord of authority, guide the decisions I make;

Lord of wholeness, invigorate me while I rest;

Lord of creation, restore me even while I sleep;

Be with me every day, when I awake, so I may abide with You forever.

## Bible Study - 1 Samuel 22:1-6

<sup>1</sup> *David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's house heard about it, they went down there to him.*

<sup>2</sup> *Then people gathered to him; everyone who was in distress, everyone in debt, and everyone who was discontented; and he became their leader. There were with him about four hundred men.*

<sup>3</sup> *David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, 'Please let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me.'*<sup>4</sup> *And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.*

<sup>5</sup> *Then the prophet Gad said to David, 'Do not remain in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah.'* *So David departed, and went into the forest of Hereth.* <sup>6</sup> *Now Saul heard that David had been found, together with the men who were with him. Saul was sitting at Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree on the*

*height, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.*

## Review

David fled from the city of Gath (21:10-15), heading for the mountains of Judah where he took refuge in the cave of Adullam. This was a barren spot in the mountains from where David could quickly escape in a number of directions if he so needed. It was a move made out of desperation, but it worked out for good, and the Lord's hand was guiding David, and something remarkable happened. David's first instinct to flee from Saul and get out of the country was understandable but not in his best interests, and in returning to the Judean hills it became possible for his family to come to see him. Scripture records this briefly (22:1), but it would have meant a great deal to David. His family probably brought everything they had, because they knew that by coming to the cave they put their lives in danger, but their coming would have given David practical and spiritual support. The cave may not have felt like the best place in the world, but it was the right place for them all to be in God's plan of things.

As an outlaw with a reputation as a leader, various people came to David (22:2), many of whom had cause to be 'on the run' themselves. However, David's influence was considerable, and in only a little time, he had gathered a band of four hundred men. This represented a significant fighting force, and in addition, it is likely that many were aware of what was going on and they saw David as the next King. They believed it was in their interests to come and join him. With this group of followers, David was now able to take control affairs rather than be controlled by them, and firstly, he made arrangements for the safety of his family in Moab. The King of Moab would have known what was happening in Israel, yet he was willing to host David's family without involving himself with David personally; the obligations of hospitality were regarded by all as sacred. David, however, remained in the cave at Adullam, well away from Moab and out of reach of Saul.

It was at this point in David's exile when he was beginning to take control of what was happening around him, that he was visited by the prophet Gad. The primary role of a prophet in ancient Israel was to bring the Lord's message to His anointed servant, the King, so the fact that Gad came indicates that he accepted David's claim to the throne of Israel and Judah. Gad would also have known that in so doing he placed his own life in danger, but he came bearing an important message. David had returned to the mountains of Judah, but was 'holed up' in a cave, and the Lord's Word through Gad was that he should be more bold, making more exposed to Saul by living in the generally accessible lands of Judah, rather than hiding in a cave. It was a tough challenge for David; he had to face his situation head on and not hide from Saul.

By way of contrast, our passage ends with the ominous description of Saul sitting in his kingly attire under a Tamarisk tree at Gibeah, waited on by servants and receiving the news that his nemesis David was now boldly confronting his authority and living openly in Judah. He sat with his spear in his hand; the very spear he had thrown at David and at his son Jonathan more than once! Scripture is sometimes able to tell a story with as much punch and panache as any modern soap!

This whole passage describes a fascinating spiritual journey made by David. He had 'lost the plot' by fleeing to Gath (1 Sam 21:10-15), but by persisting through weakness he found himself back within God's will, and things began to unfold in a more positive way. He faced an uncertain future and many challenges, but the David at the end of this passage is very different from the David at the beginning. But what did David think? Did he imagine that he could build an army and begin a campaign against Saul? He may have thought about this, but other stories of David indicate his refusal to disrespect Saul as 'the Lord's anointed' (1 Sam 24:1-7 etc.), and David would not have endeared himself to Israel and Judah by

starting a civil war. In the light of issues these things, the message of God from Gad must have been mystifying. Why go and live in the 'lands of Judah', exposed and offering a direct challenge to Saul? Yet this was God's way. Once the prophet had delivered the message David was obedient, trusting God that this command was somehow right, despite the dangers. The contrast with Saul was obvious; Saul had long since decided to take his own advice rather than that of the prophet Samuel, but David was willing to take advice from Gad. It was clear which of the two was doing the Lord's will!

## Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. David was able to recognise Gad as a prophet. How do we recognise prophets of God in our midst today?
2. How does this passage show David's strengths and weaknesses? Read through the story and identify the two characteristics.
3. Share in your group how you have heard God's voice in the past. How do you check out the Word of God to ensure you are right?

## Discipleship

### Personal comment:

*I find the journey of David from a position of weakness to one of strength to be profoundly interesting. He does this by doing what is right and taking the tough decisions, and by trusting the word of the Lord given to him by the prophet. David would not have been able to show himself as a strong leader if he stood back from taking tough decisions, and merely remained hiding in a cave!*

### Ideas for discipleship programme

- *Are there any issues in which from a spiritual point of view, you are 'hiding in the cave?' Pray about this over a period of several days and let the Lord guide you to a better place.*
- *Write to your political leaders or representatives about the important issues of the day which need tough decisions to be made. Encourage the leaders to take radical decisions for the sake of all.*

## Final Prayer

You bless me, Lord, and I am grateful, I am unworthy of Your Love, yet You have made me welcome; I do not understand why you have loved me, but I give the whole of my life to You in praise. You have broken the powers of evil and restored my soul; thank you Jesus my Lord: AMEN.